

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION
MARCH 27, 2012

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Merion Civic Association was held on Tuesday, March 27, 2012, beginning at 7:45 p.m. at the Merion Tribute House with President Kevin Murphy presiding.

Directors present were Bagley, Blakeney, Flaks, Gordon, Greenberg, Kalner, Lam, Lapes, Lavoritano, Marmon, Murphy, Quinn, Rutzel, and Seiden.

Directors absent and excused were Browne, Eisenberg, Ettelson, Fratis, Hill, Potok, Wylonis.

Merion residents Emory Dabney, Karla Moras and Hy Myers were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m. and the February Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report – Bob Marmon presented reports for both January and February

President's Report – President Murphy began the meeting by introducing Officer Tucci, of the Lower Merion Police Department. Officer Tucci reported there were no major incidents in the last month, but did mention DUI's, vehicle accidents, a theft from an unlocked vehicle; thefts and alcohol-related calls to the St. Joe's campus. There was an attempted burglary on Oakland Terrace, but no entry was gained. Burglaries are up in Overbrook and Penn Wynne. Officer Tucci gave out the licence plate number of a car that has been reported seen in the neighborhood and may be related to criminal activity: HXN 4039. Finally, Officer Tucci advised that residents can request that their home be checked on through the "vacant home" program while away.

President Murphy then introduced Steven Cook, Chef Michael Solomonov and David Magerman, who are planning on opening an upscale kosher restaurant and catering company called Citron and Rose, which will be located at 368-370 Montgomery Avenue in Bala Cynwyd. The opening is planned for summer and the restaurant will be open Sundays-Thursdays, 5:00-10:00 p.m. Floor plans and photo mock-ups of the interior were presented. The restaurant will seat 90 people; there will be an open kitchen and a bar area on one side, with seating on the other; there will be a private dining room in the back. The dinner menu will feature meat (no dairy) kosher foods with roots in Hungary, Eastern Europe, and France. Concerns about parking were addressed. Many patrons will walk to the restaurant and valet parking will be considered if there are not enough slots in the rear lot.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Arts and Education — Frances Quinn announced the Flag Day Concert will be on June 14. Frances reminded the group that she has effectively stepped down as the Chair of the committee.

Botanical — Judith Flaks announced that spring clean-up in the park is scheduled for May 6, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Volunteers will meet at the Latches Lane entry to the park. Please bring hand tools and gloves.

Commissioner — Before Commissioner Brian Gordon arrived, Karla Moras spoke about the summer varsity tennis and basketball camps that St. Joe's is seeking to establish with a special exception application to the Zoning Hearing Board on April 5, 2012. It was suggested that the Merion Civic should perhaps take a stand on these exceptions. Brian Gordon asked Karla

Moras to draft such a resolution which he would review before the Zoning Hearing Board meeting.

Community Action, Zoning & PR – Les Greenberg spoke about the new amendments being proposed by the City Avenue District which would increase building heights by 30 feet on the Tischman/Speyer property on St. Asaph’s in exchange for a green buffer along Belmont Avenue. There will be a discussion of the amendment on April 25. Commissioner Gordon explained that the proposed amendments are confusing and the positives and negatives difficult to determine because of all the either/or kinds of clauses, which will complicate the review process by the Commissioners in time for the April 25 vote. Karla Moras proposed that instead of waiting to see what happens with the amendment process, the Civic Association should perhaps be proactive with an alternative amendment.

Federation of Civic Associations — President Murphy distributed the minutes of the Federation. Highlights included mention of stormwater damage increasing with the frequency and severity of storms. The Building and Planning Committee on March 14 considered various applications including the application by Temple Beth Hillel/Beth-El on Remington Road for an additional 13 parking spaces to its existing lot and construct an additional 73-space parking lot. The Commission is asking that the number of parking spaces be reduced in favor of preserving more trees.

Finance – Dave Rutzel announced the Finance Committee met on March 19. Funds for the restoration and installation of the historic lamppost was approved.

History — No report.

Membership – No report

Nominating -- No report.

Newsletter — Michael Seiden announced he has received several articles for the Spring Newsletter and is in the process of editing them. The theme of the newsletter is “What We do for Merion.”

School Board – Vivian Lapes reported that “Students Doe,” who sued the Lower Merion School District in Federal District Court in April 2010 regarding the redistricting that requires students in racially diverse neighborhoods to be bussed to a school outside their neighborhood, are appealing their 14th Amendment Right to Equal Protection. The judge ruled that rezoning was needed to address the achievement gap, despite the Lower Merion denial that that was the reason for redistricting. In December 2011 the 3rd Circuit Court upheld the decision of the District Court and the trial record gives evidence that racial considerations did play a part in the decision by the school district. “Students Doe” are now asking the Supreme Court to uphold their constitutional rights. All of the families involved live in Ardmore, south of Athens Avenue to County Line Road, between Cricket Avenue and Wynnewood Road.

Eighteen Lower Merion students will be going to Haiti to build a school; Bala Cynwyd Principal, Connie DiMedio will be retiring.

Social – Frances Quinn will be stepping down as Chair. A discussion about the poor attendance at the New Residents Reception proposed that the Merion Civic needs ideas on how to increase attendance or consider eliminating the event entirely. The reception requires a lot of preparation, which may not be the best use of our time when the turnout is so low.

The Flag Day Concert is scheduled for Thursday, June 14. Frances will be away and is looking for one of the Directors to introduce the band.

Station and Grounds, Postal Affairs — Scott Feuer announced the train station planting day will be on April 29 at 9:30 a.m.

Streets, Lights and Traffic – No report.

Website – No report.

Barnes – Scott Feuer announced the Barnes opening is scheduled for May 18.

Community Watch — President Murphy announced National Night Out is scheduled for August 7.

Merion Community Coalition – St. Joseph’s University Ad Hoc – No report.

Narberth Fire Company/Union Fire Company – President Murphy reported the Narberth company received 16 calls in February and Union 11. These are low numbers.

St. Joe’s – No report.

Ad Hoc Centennial Committee -- Scott Kalner announced the historical light is being purchased and will be renovated and installed at the Merion Tribute House.

Old Business – No old business to discuss.

New Business – Scott Feuer spoke about the need to revamp all the events that the Merion Civic Association organizes during the year in order to focus efforts and insure that events that are presented are well-attended.

There being no more new business, the meeting, on motion made and seconded, was unanimously adjourned at 9:50 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at the Merion Tribute House on Tuesday, April 24, 2012 at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Guy, Secretary